

Message Text

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SCHAUFLE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIAN CONFERENCE: MEETING WITH CHONA

1. I CALLED ON MARK CHONA AND DUNSTAN KAMARA ON
NOVEMBER 2ND TO DETERMINE HOW THE ZAMBIANS'
ASSESS THE CONFERENCE AND ITS PROSPECTS.

2. CHONA CAME QUICKLY TO THE POINT AND
ARGUED STRONGLY THAT THE NATIONALISTS NEEDED REASSURANCE
IN THE FORM OF A CONFIRMED DATE OF INDEPENDENCE.
THEY ARE UNDER HEAVY PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE. THE
NATIONALISTS HAD COME OVER TIME TO PAINFUL CONCLUSIONS
THAT SETTLEMENT COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH ARMED
STRUGGLE. IF THEY WERE TO BE DIVERTED FROM THIS COURSE
OF ACTION THEY NEEDED ASSURANCE THAT SMITH'S PROMISES
WOULD BE KEPT. SUSPICION OVER SMITH'S INTENTIONS HAD
RISEN BECAUSE OF THE "INSULTING LANGUAGE" USED BY MEMBERS
OF HIS DELEGATION DURING THE CONFERENCE--PARTICULARLY
VAN DER BYL. THE BRITISH HAD MADE THEIR POSITION
CLEAR. THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO ASSUME SERIOUS
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME IN RHODESIA. THE
NATIONALISTS HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY ARE NEGOTIAT-
ING WITH PEOPLE WHO IN A FEW MONTHS WILL NO LONGER
BE IN RHODESIA. IN SHORT SMITH AND HIS DELEGATION
WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT WOULD NOT

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BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

IF A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE IS CONFIRMED, CHONA ARGUED, ATTENTION WOULD BE DIVERTED FROM THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE NATIONALISTS WOULD SETTLE DOWN TO SERIOUS BUSINESS QUICKLY.

3. CHONA POINTED OUT EVERYONE WAS EAGER TO REACH A SETTLEMENT, EVEN MUGABE WHO HAD QUARRELED WITH ZAMBIA IN THE PAST AND PERSONALLY INSULTED KUANDA HAS CONVINCED CHONA THAT HE IS PREPARED TO SET ASIDE THE PAST AND WORK FOR A SETTLEMENT.

4. A RHODESIAN WHITE DELEGATION MADE UP OF MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE TOBACCO PRODUCER'S ASSOCIATION, MINERS AND THE FARMER'S UNION HAVE BEEN IN GENEVA AND HAVE MET WITH ALL THE NATIONALISTS. THESE BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE HAD NO PREVIOUS CONTACT WITH THE NATIONALISTS BUT HAVE BEEN GREATLY REASSURED BY WHAT THEY HAVE FOUND. THEY HAVE MADE THE POINT THAT AN EARLY DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WOULD HELP THEM (NKOMO, SITHOLE AND MUGABE HAVE EACH MENTIONED IN PASSING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BUSINESSMEN) AND IN FACT CHONA HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT MUGABE AND NKOMO ARE PLAYING TO WHITE BUSINESS INTERESTS.

5. THE AFRICANS ARE INTERESTED IN A SMOOTH PROCESS OF TRANSITION. CHONA SAID THAT THE TWO-TIERED SYSTEM OF A COUNCIL OF STATE AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CARRIES WITH IT INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS AND COULD LEAD TO DISPUTES AND CONFLICT. ITS FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS LIES IN THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO ARBITRATION AUTHORITY. IF BRIGAIN WERE TO REASSUME HER RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES, AN AGREEMENT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED. BRITISH RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD BE LIMITED TO CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS RELATED TO DECOLONIZATION AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN WHICH OFFICERS IN THE SECURITY FORCES MUST SWEAR, GIVES BRITAIN A MECHANISM FOR ASSUMING SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY DURING THE LIFE OF THE TRANS-
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ITIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE AFRICANS, CHONA POINTED OUT, WOULD ALSO ARGUE THAT LEGISLATIVE POWERS SHOULD BE VESTED IN THE CABINET AND UNDER BRITISH CONSTITUTIONAL LAW THIS ARRANGEMENT IS POSSIBLE.

6. I TOLD CHONA THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE NATIONALISTS TO KEEP SMITH'S POSITION IN MIND IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO BE SUCCESSFUL. HE HAD TO BE ABLE TO CARRY HIS CONSTITUENCY. RHODESIAN WHITES ARE LIKE ANOTHER MINORITY AND ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE. SMITH HAS MADE WHAT HE CONSIDERS MAJOR CONCESSIONS AND HAS SEEN THEM REBUFFED BY NATIONALISTS. CHONA ADMITTED THE POINT BUT SAID THAT THE COMPORTMENT OF THE RHODESIAN DELEGATION WAS MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR THE AFRICANS TO ACT IN A MODERATE FASHION. HE REITERATED HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH VAN DER BYL'S PERFORMANCE.

7. THE SMITH DELEGATION'S BEHAVIOR WAS FEEDING THE GENEVA RUMOR MILL. THE LATEST RUMOR WHICH IS GAINING CREDIBILITY IN AFRICAN CIRCLES PRESUMES THAT IF FORD WINS THE ELECTION, SMITH WILL RETURN TO GENEVA AND CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS. IF CARTER WINS, SMITH WILL ASSUME THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE IS OVER AND WILL WITHDRAW AND AWAIT A NEW AMERICAN APPROACH. I REMINDED CHONA IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE. WHATEVER ONE THINKS OF SMITH'S GOVERNMENT IT IS A FUNCTIONING AUTHORITY AND IT REQUIRES HIS SUPERVISION. THERE IS NO POINT IN NOT TAKING SMITH AT HIS WORD. UNTIL EVENTS PROVE OTHERWISE. THE BEST THING AFRICANS COULD DO WOULD BE TO STAY IN GENEVA AND DEMONSTRATE THEIR SINCERITY IN SEEKING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. OTHERWISE THEY COULD BE BLAMED FOR BREAKDOWN OF CONFERENCE WHICH COULD BE TURNED AGAINST THEM.

8. CHONA AND I ENDED OUR DISCUSSION WITH HIS RESTATING THE URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF SMITH CONFIRMING A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. HE ALLOWED THAT THERE NEED NOT BE A FIXED DATE BUT RATHER A RANGE OF DATES. CONFIRMATION OF A FIXED DATE COULD COME

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ONCE THE STRUCTURE OF A GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED. CHONA IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD PURSUE THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT WITH THE NATIONALISTS PRIOR TO THEIR AFTERNOON MEETING WITH SMITH AND THE BRITISH. HE UNDERSTOOD THE POINT THAT SMITH CANNOT CONTINUE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS WITHOUT FINDING SOME RESPONSE FROM THE NATIONALISTS. CATTO

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